



"The Cluster needs parks, greenways and biking and walking trails. These add to the fabric of our neighborhoods."

Pat Bosch, Director, Nortown CDC and Cluster Board member

## **Cluster 1's Vision for Environment Is...**

*Throughout Cluster 1, residents have access to safe well maintained parks where children can play and adults can exercise and relax. Industrial businesses in the Cluster use "waste minimization" technologies and an eco-industrial park has been created in one of the Renaissance Zones that allows businesses to be far better neighbors in the Cluster than in the past. Detroit's Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality have provided financial incentives for the redevelopment of brownfields as well as the clean-up of lead and asbestos contamination from areas that have since been redeveloped as residential areas.*

*Cluster neighborhoods are connected to each other, to neighborhood commercial facilities and to the Detroit River by a series of linked greenways that encourages biking and pedestrian usage. The Cluster has taken advantage of the surplus vacant land to create a beautiful, attractive, sustainable place where people want to live and work.*

### **Environment Reinvestment Issues**

Environment reinvestments in the Cluster should acknowledge the link between the quality of the environment and the ability of the Cluster to attract and keep good businesses and strong neighborhoods. The Cluster has ample vacant land from population and business losses. Residents want to use this opportunity to redevelop their neighborhoods in ways that better separate industrial and residential uses and provide more greenspace in the Cluster.

### **Summary of Prioritized Land Use & Policy Environment Reinvestment Recommendations**

1. Require businesses to share information so that residents are knowledgeable about the processes used by and waste produced by Cluster businesses.
2. The City and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality should work with neighborhood groups to develop a process to test soils in community gardens for lead and other contamination and address problems discovered.
3. The City should work with community-based housing organizations and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to develop a process that allows remediation funds to be used for the clean-up of residential land contaminated with lead and asbestos.
4. Aggressively clean-up brownfields by establishing a Brownfields Redevelopment Authority that has citizen representation on a site selection committee.

5. Work with the community to develop specific plans for the creation of greenways and community gardens and parks on surplus commercial land.
6. Educate citizens by making TRI (Toxic Release Information) and other environmental information available at all Detroit public libraries.
7. Award contracts to community-based organizations located in the Cluster to maintain the thirty-six small parks in the Cluster.
8. Require industrial and commercial businesses to use landscaping and berms to buffer neighborhoods from business uses.
9. Create additional parks in the south end of the Cluster. Any parks lost due to the City Airport expansion should be replaced in other parts of the Cluster.
10. Work with Cluster businesses and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to reduce human health risks in the Cluster by providing tax and financial incentives to industrial businesses to implement "waste minimization" and "pollution prevention" techniques that allow them to decrease their costs while reducing the amount of hazardous waste they produce.
11. Work with the community to reduce blight by implementing a Citizen Code Enforcement Program.

## ***Detailed Description of Land Use/Physical Environment Reinvestment Priorities***

1. **The City and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality should work with neighborhood groups to develop a process to test soils in community gardens for lead and other contamination and address problems discovered.**

There are a number of community gardens in the Cluster and many neighborhoods would like to use vacant lots to create additional gardens. However, many parts of the Cluster have lead and asbestos, and possibly other contaminants, in the soils. The City should work with the community to ensure that sites are tested before gardens are planted.

The City, perhaps through its Farm-A-Lot program, and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality should work with the community to develop a process to test soils. The process should provide training in how to collect and test soils for contamination. The process developed should also include educating residents in ways to reduce their exposure, such as planting in raised beds, if contamination is found. Other abatement remedies should also be considered.

2. **Aggressively clean-up brownfields by establishing a Brownfields Redevelopment Authority that has citizen representation on a Site Selection Committee.**

The City should move quickly to establish a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and issue bonds to finance the remediation of brownfields. Detroit residents should be selected to sit on an Site Selection Committee to ensure that the community has input into the identification, selection and prioritization of brownfields to be cleaned up.

3. **Work with the community to develop specific plans for the creation of greenways and community gardens and parks on surplus commercial land.**

The City should rezone some vacant commercial land as Parks and Recreation and fund the development of linked greenways throughout the Cluster and the City. For instance, Conner Playfield can be part of a linked greenway connecting the Cluster to other neighborhoods and to the Detroit River. The Parks and Recreation Department should work with the community to identify the most appropriate areas for greenways in the Cluster.

4. **Better maintain City-owned parks by awarding contracts to community-based organizations to maintain the thirty-six small parks in the Cluster.**

Over eighty percent of the parks in the Cluster are under four acres and many are poorly maintained. One or more community-based organizations in the Cluster should be encouraged to create a lawn care service, similar to the program at Core City Neighborhoods, and be awarded contracts from the City to maintain these parks.

5. **Require industrial businesses to use landscaping and berms to buffer residential neighborhoods from industrial uses.**

The City should work with the community to modify the Zoning Ordinance to include landscape requirements for industrial uses. The City should also work with the community to develop design standards for industrial businesses so that new industrial development is required to include landscaping and berms to buffer residential neighborhoods.

6. **Create additional parks in the south end of the Cluster. Any parks lost due to the City Airport expansion, should be replaced in other parts of the Cluster.**

Although the Cluster has forty-two parks and recreation centers, the southern end of the Cluster is under-served and needs additional parks and a greenway created in areas that are now vacant. The Parks and Recreation Department should work with the community to identify the most appropriate sites for parks and greenways.

## ***Detailed Description of Policy/Programmatic Environment*** **Reinvestment Priorities**

1. **Require Cluster businesses that produce hazardous waste to share information with the community so that residents are informed about the industrial processes used and hazardous waste produced by their businesses.**
2. **The City should work with community-based housing organizations and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to develop a process that allows remediation funds to be used for the clean-up of residential land contaminated with lead and asbestos.**

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality has funds available for site clean-up. However, these funds have only been used to clean up industrial and commercial sites. The City must work with community-based housing development organizations and the State to ensure that these funds can be used to remove lead, asbestos and other contamination from historically residential areas before these sites are redeveloped as new residential neighborhoods.

3. **Create educated citizens by making TRI (Toxic Release Information) and other environmental information available through Community-Right-To-Know legislation available at all Detroit public libraries.**
4. **Work with Cluster businesses and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to reduce human health risks in the Cluster by providing tax and financial incentives to industrial businesses to implement “waste minimization” and “pollution prevention” techniques that allow them to decrease their costs while reducing the amount of hazardous waste they produce.**

The City and State should provide financial and taxing incentives for businesses to use “waste minimization” technologies to reduce the amount of hazardous waste created in the City and promote the development of an Eco-industrial park, like the one being developed in Baltimore’s Empowerment Zone.

Residents are very concerned about health risks associated with living in an area that has a number of heavily industrialized areas. The use of “waste minimization” technologies will reduce the amount of hazardous waste produced and air emissions released in the Cluster. (See also the Jobs Centers Reinvestment Recommendations section.)

5. **Work with Cluster neighborhood organizations to reduce blight by implementing a Citizen Code Enforcement Program.**

Cluster residents want to work with the City to develop a Citizen Code Enforcement program. Citizen code enforcement programs have been successfully implemented in Atlanta, Minneapolis and Tampa. (See also the Housing Reinvestment Recommendations section.)